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[H.R. 4084 Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act, as amended](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Monday, February 29, 2016, the House will consider [H.R. 4084](#), the Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act, as amended, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 4084 was introduced on November 19, 2015 by Rep. Randy Weber (R-TX), and was referred to the Committee on Science, Space and Technology, which ordered the bill to be reported by voice vote, as amended, on January 12, 2016.

SUMMARY

H.R. 4084 would provide statutory direction for the Department of Energy's (DOE) research and development (R&D) for, and private investment in, advanced nuclear energy technologies. Specifically, this bill would:

- Ensure DOE enables the private sector to partner with national laboratories to develop novel reactor concepts
- Leverage DOE's supercomputing infrastructure to accelerate nuclear energy R&D
- Authorize DOE to enable the private sector to construct and operate privately-funded reactor prototypes at DOE sites
- Require DOE to produce a transparent, strategic, 10-year plan under two budget scenarios for prioritizing nuclear R&D programs, one which considers budget constraints the other which does not.
- Provide DOE with statutory direction for a reactor-based fast neutron source that will operate as an open-access user facility to enable academic and proprietary research in the U.S.

BACKGROUND

DOE's national laboratory complex provides the facilities and expertise to conduct R&D development for military and civilian applications of nuclear energy. However, the U.S. regulatory system, managed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is unable to process licenses in a timely manner which suppresses private investment and technology development.¹

According to the bill sponsor, "The Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act directs DOE to prioritize its R&D infrastructure on capabilities that will enable the private sector to develop advanced

¹ See [Section-by-Section Analysis](#)

reactor technologies that could yield inherent safety, less waste, higher thermal efficiency, zero air emissions, increased reliability, and greater resistance to proliferation.”²

COST

A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that enacting H.R. 4084 would not significantly affect the Department of Energy’s costs to carry out its nuclear programs, which are subject to appropriation. Funding for nuclear energy programs in 2016 totals \$986 million.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [Molly Newell](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 2-1374.

² See Science, Space, and Technology Committee Press Release, “[Committee Introduces Bipartisan Nuclear R&D Bill](#),” Nov. 19, 2015.